



COLUMBIA HEIGHTS POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY MANUAL

TITLE: LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH	GENERAL ORDER NUMBER: 801
REFERENCES: M.S. § 626.05	EFFECTIVE DATE: 06/01/2016
REVIEW DATE: 01/01/2019	DISTRIBUTION: A

The Columbia Heights Police Department recognizes that all employees in the performance of their duties may be exposed to incidents of a critical nature. The purpose of this General Order is to help employees recognize and minimize through prompt intervention the potential negative effects of stress caused by traumatic events, and to provide the scene supervisor with procedures for immediate notification of support personnel.

801:1 Definitions

Licensed Peace Officer

Those active Department members employed in the classification of officer, performing peace officer duties as defined by Minnesota Statute §626.05.

On Duty

Any active Department employee who is working a regular, overtime, or volunteer shift; or, in the case of a licensed peace officer, is engaged in a lawful police action.

Off Duty

Any active Department employee who is not working a regular, overtime, or volunteer shift; or, in the case of a licensed peace officer, is not engaged in a lawful police action.

Traumatic Experience

Witnessing, or being confronted with, an incident or multiple incidents that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury.

Line-of-Duty Death

Line of duty death is a death of an employee occurring while performing in the scope of one's duties.

Non Line-of-Duty Death

Any death occurring off duty that is accidental, natural, or intentional that is not a result of a police action.

Public Safety Peer Counseling Debriefing (PSPC)

An educational, as well as psychological, process designed to lessen the impact of a critical incident. PSPC sessions provide employees with the professional assistance necessary to maintain their emotional and physical well-being.

Line of Duty Death Information Packet

A confidential and voluntary packet which officers can elect to fill out to assist with their final requests and wishes in the event of a duty-related serious injury or death.

801:2 Initial Action

801:21 Department Notification

The Chief shall be notified immediately of any serious injury or death of an employee. The supervisor to have initial knowledge of the critical injury or death shall be responsible for the notification.

801:211

In the absence of the Chief, the order of notification shall be the Police Captain.

801:212

In the event the death is a result of a criminal act, the investigation of the incident shall be the first priority. The Chief shall be the final authority for the assignment of investigating authority.

801:22 Investigative Procedures

The procedures to be followed during the investigative stages shall include, but not be limited to:

- Scene security, identifying and securing of evidence;
- Keeping witnesses present and separated;
- Obtaining necessary search and arrest warrants;
- Medical examiner notification;
- Interviews;
- Follow-up investigation;
- Notification of next-of-kin;
- Arrest of perpetrators; and
- Interrogations.

801:23 News Media

The name of the injured or deceased employee shall be withheld from release to the news media until all immediate family members have been notified.

801:24 Appointments of Department Personnel for Coordination of Department Assistance

The designated departmental officer or officers shall begin serving in the following capacities:

- Notification Officer;
- Family Liaison Officer; and
- Department Liaison Officer.

801:2401

In the event of an incident which involves death or a serious injury which could lead to a line of duty death, it should be determined by a supervisor, or other authorized member of the agency, if the

injured/deceased officer has a Line of Duty Death Information packet on file in their evaluation file. If the packet is on file, then the seal on the envelope shall be broken and the contents used as a guide when carrying out the requirements of this policy.

801:241

The Chief of Police or designee shall:

- Make additional personnel assignments to assist in handling incoming phone calls and inquiries, and to direct the public to appropriate personnel;
- Ensure that the Employee Assistance Program is implemented to assist surviving family members, and emphasize the family's right to psychological services; and
- Ensure that other officers are provided with the same opportunity to participate in critical incident stress debriefings with psychological services.

801:25 Notification Officer

A notification officer shall be designated by the Chief or the highest-ranking Department member at the scene.

801:251

It is preferable that the officer selected to make the notification not be closely associated with the incident.

801:252

The officer selected to make the notification shall always be accompanied by either another employee, or a member of the clergy.

801:253

Every effort shall be made to conduct the notification in private. Inform the family members of all known facts surrounding the incident, with the exception of confidential facts that may be relevant to a criminal investigation.

801:254

If the next-of-kin wishes to go to the hospital, the family members shall be transported by the Notification Officer in a Department vehicle. Hospital staff shall be notified so that the body can be made presentable.

801:255

If there are young children in the home, the Notification Officer shall make arrangements for the care of the children.

801:256

Notification of next-of-kin who live outside the metro area shall be arranged for through a local law enforcement agency.

801:257

All notification arrangements shall be done by telephone or in person, and not by police radio.

801:258

Employees who were at the scene, or arrived shortly after a employee has been seriously injured or killed, should be relieved from duty as soon as possible.

801:259

Employee witnesses, and other employees of the Department who may have been emotionally affected by the serious injury or death of another employee, shall attend a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing held by a Anoka County Public Safety Peer Support team or other mental health professional.

801:26 Family Liaison Officer

An employee shall be selected by the Chief to assist the family as the Family Liaison Officer. The selection of a Family Liaison Officer is critical. It should be someone who has enjoyed a close relationship with the fallen employee and his/her family.

801:261

The Family Liaison Officer shall assist the family with any or all of the following:

- Facilitating the Department support for the family;
- Assisting the family with funeral arrangements, including any family-desired participation by the law enforcement community;
- Keeping the family apprised of information concerning the death and the continuing investigation;
- Providing assistance with arrangements for travel, lodging, and child care;
- Being constantly available to the family by phone or pager; and
- Assisting the family with the application process for available benefits.

801:27 Department Liaison Officer

The Chief shall immediately appoint a Department Liaison Officer to coordinate Department and other agency resources.

801:271

The Department Liaison Officer shall be granted the authority to delegate tasks associated with the critical incident to other employees, agencies, and organizations.

801:272

The Department Liaison Officer must coordinate many activities. It is imperative that the Department Liaison Officer consults with the Family Liaison Officer to ensure that the family is involved in all decision-making regarding planned events.

801:273

The Department Liaison Officer shall coordinate any or all of the following:

- News releases and media participation in any planned Department events;
- Plan regular meetings with command staff and other essential personnel to keep the staff informed of the family's wishes and all planned events;
- Coordinate the funeral activities and establish an itinerary with:
 - The Chief;
 - Family representatives;
 - Funeral Director;
 - Law Enforcement Memorial Association representatives;
 - Clergy;
 - Honor guard representative;
 - Seating of family, visiting guests, and others at the funeral; and
 - Traffic management issues;
- Update regional law enforcement personnel on such issues as:
 - The name of the deceased;
 - The date and time of death;
 - Circumstances surrounding the death;
 - Funeral arrangements including appropriate uniform-of-the-day;
 - Appropriate expressions of sympathy (donations and flowers); and
 - The name and phone number of the Department official contact person;
- Assignment of an officer to the home(s) of family members during the funeral;
- If requested, assignment of routine residence checks at the home(s) of family members;
- Arrange for the return of personal belongings of the officer to the family; and
- After completion of the funeral, prepare for the Chief's signature, appropriate written

acknowledgements to assisting and visiting agencies, assisting businesses, and organizations.

801:3 Minnesota Law Enforcement Memorial Association (LEMA)

801:31 LEMA Support

Following a member's death, it must be remembered that Department personnel will also be in the grieving process. Many times issues or details will be forgotten. All funeral details are placed into action within three (3) days of the death. The Minnesota Law Enforcement Memorial Association serves all law enforcement in the state, and is available at a moment's notice to assist in the planning and to share the previous experience of many law enforcement funerals. A LEMA representative will contact the Department immediately upon hearing of a licensed peace officer's line-of-duty death. That representative shall be placed in contact with the Department Liaison Officer.

801:32 General Duties

General duties of the Law Enforcement Memorial Association representative are as follows:

- Assist in coordinating the funeral location;
- Assist in coordinating the funeral service;
- Assist in coordinating the graveside service;
- Act as an advisor to the Department in the area of personnel needs during the services;
- Provide a statue of "The Protector" to the family;
- Provide the American flag for the casket, and for presentation to the family;
- Provide for the reading of the "Law Enforcement Memorial Prayer";

- Provide a framed copy of the prayer to the family;
- Provide a complete package of known benefits, both state and federal, to the Department Liaison Officer, with assistance to the family in completing the package;
- Provide the State Color Guard if needed;
- Provide the bugler for taps, if needed; and
- Provide the rifle squad for the twenty-one-gun salute, if needed.

801:4 Uniform Requirements

801:41 Uniform Designation

Weather will determine which seasonal uniform shall be worn for the funeral of an officer killed in the line of duty. The Department Liaison Officer shall discuss the uniform designation with the Chief prior to making an announcement internally and externally.

801:42 Badge Covers

801:421 Line-of-Duty Death

Badge covers shall be no more than 1" wide. For deaths occurring within the Columbia Heights Police Department, uniformed and non-uniformed badge carrying personnel shall cover their badge for a period of thirty (30) days from the date of death; or in the case of a memorial service, for no more than one (1) week after the service.

801:422 Non-Line-of-Duty Death and Line-of-Duty Death from Another Agency

In non-line-of-duty deaths and line-of-duty deaths for members of another agency, badges shall be covered from the date of death to the end of shift on the day of the funeral or memorial service.

801:5 Funeral and Memorial Service

801:51 Employee's Line-of-Duty Death

Every effort shall be made to allow all employees of the Columbia Heights Police Department to attend a line-of-duty death funeral or memorial service. Employees wishing not to attend shall make their feelings known to their supervisor as soon as possible. They may be asked to fill staffing vacancies as needed.

801:52 Employee's Non-Line-of-Duty Death

Those employees wishing to attend a non-line-of-duty death funeral of a Department employee shall let a supervisor know as soon as possible.

801:53 Other Agency Funeral

801:531 On-Duty Personnel

It shall be the decision of the police administration as to how many on-duty personnel may attend a funeral.

801:532 Off-Duty Personnel

Off-duty personnel may attend the funeral without compensation, and may use a marked vehicle if one is available. Appropriate uniform shall be determined by the hosting agency.

801:6 Workers' Compensation Reporting

Statutorily required worker's compensation reporting for employee injury or death shall be the responsibility of the Human Resources Department and Chief's administration.

801:7 Line of Duty Death Information Packet

In an effort to give each officer the opportunity to provide input and make choices in the event of a line of duty death, the department will make use of optional Line of Duty Death Information packet packets under the following conditions.

- Line of Duty Death Information packet completion is voluntary
- The completed packet is sealed by the officer and stored in the officers evaluation file
- The officer will have the option to review the packet and make changes annually.
- A supervisor, or authorized person, shall access the packet in the event of a line-of-duty death or serious injury of a life-threatening nature.
- The contents of the packet shall be used as a guide when making arrangements pursuant to this policy
- The wishes of the deceased officer's family will also be taken into consideration and followed to the extend practical.

BY ORDER OF:

Scott Nadeau, Chief of Police

[Back to Top](#)